

Program Notice

FGIS-PN-09-03

2-02-09

USE OF CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SYSTEMS FOR RAILCAR STOWAGE EXAMS

1. PURPOSE

This program notice provides guidelines for installing and approving closed-circuit television systems (CCTV) that are used for stowage examinations of rail cars.

2. BACKGROUND

Due to safety concerns about falls from railcars, the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) is supporting efforts to minimize the need for personnel to be on top of railcars, especially when fall protection devices are not available. Stowage exams have traditionally been conducted in the railroad yard away from areas equipped with fall protection devices. This practice not only exposes official personnel to falls while performing the stowage exams, but also exposes facility personnel to the risk of falling when they open compartment covers.

In response to these concerns, facilities are switching to performing all of these functions when the railcar is in an area with fall protection. Additionally, facilities are installing CCTV systems that utilize video cameras (stationary or mounted on moveable arms) mounted above the openings of the railcars for performing stowage examinations.

3. POLICY

Video systems must meet the following requirements when used for official stowage examinations:

- a. The official service provider (OSP) must approve the video system for use and notify GIPSA's Policy and Procedures Branch of their approval.
- b. Before an approval is issued, the OSP must examine the system on-site. The OSP is responsible for determining if the video system provides an image sufficient enough to determine whether a railcar is fit to receive grain. If the system fails to deliver an adequate view of the stowage area or carrier identification (if needed), official personnel must physically inspect the railcar.
 - (1) The video system must produce color images of acceptable quality of any materials (grain or non-grain) remaining in the carrier. Either a high-resolution camera (1.3 megapixel or greater) or a remotely operated zoom lens is recommended.

- (2) Artificial lighting may need to be adjusted to adequately light the inspection area.
 - (3) Image clarity is critical since dust and condensation may obstruct the camera view.
 - (4) Cameras must be mounted so they do not create hazards or interfere with fall protection cables. The recommended mounting height is approximately 10 feet above the railcar.
 - (5) At a minimum, the video system must view the entire bottom gate of a compartment and a portion of the sides, as well as the condition of the compartment covers. The OSP may determine the required view of the compartment sides. Cameras may require pan and tilt capabilities, or multiple cameras may need to be installed to achieve adequate images.
- c. The OSP is responsible for determining if one person can perform both the stowage exam and the sampling/inspection functions, or if additional personnel are required.
 - d. Approval may be revoked if the system fails to perform adequately. Official personnel must physically inspect the railcars if this occurs.
 - e. If the system is modified, approval must be re-issued before the system is used for official purposes.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

OSPs are responsible for reviewing CCTV systems at facilities they service, verifying that the systems meet the requirements of this notice, and documenting the approval of the video systems.

Grain companies that intend to install CCTV systems for railcar stowage exams are responsible for notifying the appropriate OSP and providing system documentation.

5. ACTIONS

Retain a copy of this notice with FGIS Directive 9180.48, "Stowage Examination Services," until the directive has been updated to reflect this change.

6. QUESTIONS

Direct any questions concerning this policy to Nelson Buck at (202) 720-0271 or email at nelson.l.buck@usda.gov

/s/ John Giler

John Giler, Director
Field Management Division